

# Fact Sheet

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## WORKPLACE SUBSTANCE ABUSE RELATED VIOLENCE & SECURITY ISSUES

### *Substance Abuse and Violence*

In 1990, more than 1 million arrests were made for drug offenses (sales/manufacturing and possession) and more than 3 million for alcohol offenses (DUI, liquor law violations, drunkenness, and disorderly conduct).

(1)

At least half of the individuals arrested for major crimes including homicide, theft, and assault were under the influence of illicit drugs around the time of their arrest. (1)

Alcohol is more likely than illicit drugs to be involved in crimes against people than property. Alcohol has been imbibed by the offender, the victim, or both in 1/2 to 2/3 of homicides and serious assaults. (1)

Violence-induced brain injuries constitute approximately 1/5 of total number of brain injuries incurred each year. At least 1/2 of these incidents involved alcohol or other drugs. (2)

### *Substance Abuse and Violence in the Workplace*

Drug- and alcohol-related problems are one of the four top reasons for the rise in workplace violence. (3)

Employers are concerned about appropriate responses to workplace drug crimes and related legal liability issues. Through the use of private security and cooperating with law enforcement, businesses have the opportunity to make a difference in reducing America's problem with drugs in the workplace. (4,5)

In 1997, drug abuse cost corporate America \$85 billion. (4)

Seventy-four percent of illicit drug users are employed. (4)

In 1997, over 6,000,000 employees were threatened in the workplace. (4)

The U.S. consumes 60% of the world's illegal drugs and has approximately 8% of the world's population. (4)

Drugs account for as much as 80% of losses due to theft in the workplace. (4)

One out of four substance abusers in treatment admitted stealing from their employer. (4)

Of those who called a cocaine helpline, 75% reported using drugs on the job, 64% admitted drugs adversely affected their job performance, 44% sold drugs to other employees, and 18% had stolen from co-workers to support their drug habit. (3)

## ***Violence and Security Issues (Continued)***

### ***Combating Substance Abuse in the Workplace***

One way that employers have worked to reduce illicit drug use in the workplace is to institute a drug testing program.

There is good support for employee drug testing: (4)

- 92% favor testing for safety-sensitive jobs;
- 73% favor testing for factory workers; and
- 60% favor testing for office workers.

Support for employee drug testing has increased over the last ten years: (4)

- 1987 — 50% responded YES;
- 1991 — 76% responded YES; and
- 1995 — 85% responded YES.

Despite such relatively widespread support, 80% of the U.S. workforce is employed by small- and medium-sized firms where drug testing policies and programs aren't in place. (4)

Drug testing is part of a comprehensive drug-free workplace program, which typically includes the following components: (6)

- A written drug-free workplace policy that has been reviewed by legal counsel;
- Programs to increase the awareness of substance abuse among employees;
- Training for supervisors in recognizing and intervening in drug abuse;
- An employee assistance program to assess, refer, and sometimes treat workers for substance abuse problems; and
- Urine testing for the presence of illicit drugs.

Employers are advised to take the following steps to alleviate drug crimes at their company: (6)

- Take internal steps to define your problem;
- Get legal advice;
- Contact law enforcement;
- Use private security resources; and
- Prosecute offenders.

### ***References***

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